

Week 7 Essay

William James's view of consciousness differed significantly from Wundt's view. James believed that consciousness could not be reduced to simple elements or sensations, as Wundt had suggested. Rather, James viewed consciousness as a constantly changing flow of thoughts, feelings and sensations, which he called the stream of consciousness. James believed that consciousness was adaptive, serving a purpose for the organism rather than being a static collection of mental elements.

James saw the purpose of consciousness as helping organisms to adapt to their environment. He believed that consciousness allowed humans and animals to select and prioritize certain aspects of the environment to attend to, while ignoring others. In this way, consciousness helped organisms to make sense of their surroundings and to respond in adaptive ways to changing circumstances. He also believed that consciousness played a role in decision making and problem solving, allowing individuals to consider multiple options and choose the best course of action. Overall, James saw consciousness as a dynamic and adaptive process that served an important purpose in helping organisms survive and thrive in their environment.